STUDENTS & ADHD

STRENGTHS, NEEDS AND STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS WHO HAVE ADHD

What Is ADHD?

People with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) show a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development, and that impacts learning. They can be **inattentive**, **hyperactive**, or a **combination** of both (the most common form).

The Needs of Students with ADHD

Strengths of students with ADHD include:

- Creativity
- Problem-solving skills
- Determination
- Being energetic
- Intelligence
- Eager to try new things
- Hardworking
- Perseverance

At home:

- Difficulty following home routines
- Increase in frequency of arguments with parents and siblings
- Difficulty completing homework, daily chores
- Messy/disorganized room
- May have problems with punctuality

65% of children with ADHD have problems with defiance & complying with expectations.

At school:

- Difficulty remaining seated in class
- Difficulty completing work in a timely fashion
- Difficulty organizing materials
- May appear to lack motivation
- May act without considering the consequences

25% of children with ADHD also have problems with listening skills, reading comprehension and/or math

Socially:

- Difficulty regulating behavior on playground
- Trouble interacting with peers
- Difficulty waiting turns during games
- Trouble coping with frustration which may lead to irritability/anger
- May socially isolate themselves

Children with ADHD are 30% slower in emotional development than peers.

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The Three Types of ADHD

Type 1 – Inattentive

These individuals exhibit significant inattention across multiple domains with no significant hyperactivity or impulsivity.

People with inattentive ADHD often:

- Make mistakes in schoolwork
- Have trouble keeping attention on tasks or play activities
- Do not seem to listen when spoken to directly
- Do not follow through on instructions and fail to finish schoolwork.
- Have trouble organizing activities
- Are slow to process information
- Avoid, dislike, or don't want to do things that take a lot of mental effort for a long period of time
- Lose things needed for tasks and activities (e.g. toys, assignments, books, tools)
- Are easily distracted
- Are forgetful in daily activities

Type 2 – Hyperactive

These individuals exhibit adequate attentional control, but present with significant deficits with activity level and/or impulse control.

People with hyperactive ADHD often:

- Fidget with hands or feet in seat when sitting still is expected
- Get up from seat when remaining in seat is expected
- Excessively run about or climb when and where it is not appropriate (adolescents or adults may feel very restless)
- Have trouble playing or doing leisure activities quietly
- Talk loudly and/or excessively
- Blurt out answers before questions have been finished
- Have trouble waiting one's turn
- Interrupt or intrude on others
- Are "on the go" or act as if "driven by a motor"

Type 3 – Combination

A third type of ADHD involves both hyperactivity and inattention, combining the characteristics of the other two types.

A combination of inattentiveness and hyperactivity is the **most common form** of ADHD.
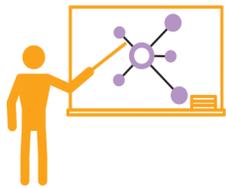
Strategies for working with students who have ADHD:

Students who are inattentive (type 1):

♦ Consider student placement within the classroom environment; when possible, seat them away from doors and windows
♦ Help the child learn to make and use checklists, crossing items off as they are accomplished
♦ Develop and use a behavior plan with specific goals and daily positive reinforcement
♦ Divide big assignments into several smaller ones
♦ Use a timer to complete a reasonable amount of work
♦ Provide assistance with organization
♦ Assign the student a peer partner to clarify questions as needed or to provide on-task reminders
♦ Provide study carrels or quiet work areas; in extreme cases, earphones or earplugs may be needed
♦ Utilize student signals (such as turning off the lights or playing music) to gain student attention
♦ Allow at least 5 seconds of wait time when asking students to respond to questions
♦ Use whole-class responses to ensure students are engaged in instruction
♦ When appropriate, allow the student to use learning aides (computers, calculators, etc.)
♦ Help the student develop their own strategies for coping with their inattentiveness
♦ Teach self-management of behavior
♦ Model appropriate behavior modeling

Students who are hyperactive (type 2):

♦ Develop and use a behavior plan with specific goals and daily positive reinforcement
♦ Clear hands and desk of distractions
♦ Allow legitimate movement
♦ Allow students to stand while working
♦ Use discreet gestures or words you have previously agreed upon to let the child know they are interrupting; praise the child for interruption-free conversations
♦ Provide assistance with organization
♦ Work with student to create a behavioral contract
♦ Maintain proximity control
♦ Give consequences immediately following misbehavior; be specific in your explanation, making sure the child knows how they misbehaved
♦ Use physical cueing (hand on shoulder, tapping desk)
♦ Help the student develop their own strategies for coping with their impulsiveness
♦ Utilize preventative cueing
♦ Help physically guide students through transitions
♦ Reward positive behavior
♦ Insure that all staff working with a student are aware of their unique learning needs
♦ Make sure necessary supplies are available so students can work independently without excuses
♦ Provide opportunities for physical movement (e.g., running errands, distributing/collecting materials)
♦ When appropriate, utilize multisensory instruction
♦ Recognize good behavior out loud; be specific in your praise, making sure the child knows what they did right

Above all, differentiate the child from the behavior.
See the child first, then the behavior!

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